Problem of the Week

Number Five

February 11, 2013

So I was reminded recently of my old friend Lawrence Tap, who was running a lecture series in the small town where he lived. The organizers were always inundated with proposals for talks, meaning that difficult decisions had to be made about whether or not to have parallel sessions. One day, a proposal came in for a strange talk about a female nomad. Responding to these issues, Larry sent the following note to his assistant, Patrick, written in his characteristically clipped style:

Pat,

Let one rustic at a time yammer. "A Hag, Nomad, Evil Madam Lived Among a Harem," may emit a tacit, sure note.

L. Tap

Yes, a remarkable note indeed. Can you tell me what's especially remarkable about it? No hints, except to say that when you see the point you will know that you see it.

Now for the problem of the week:

The array below is part of a semi-magic square, meaning that the numbers in each of the five rows have the same sum, and the numbers in each of the five columns also add up to that same sum. As you can see, many of the numbers have been left out. Your problem is to determine the number in the cell marked with an X. DO NOT assume that the twenty-five numbers in the cells are necessarily the numbers from 1 to 25.

	25		13	
14		2		20
	16		9	
10		23		11
	12		X	

Solutions are due to Jason Rosenhouse by 5:00 on Friday, February 15. One weekly winner will receive a five-dollar gift card from Starbucks. Winners will be drawn randomly from among the correct answers. Hand in your solutions on this paper, with your name on the front in the upper right corner, and your clearly-explained solution on the back. Be sure to check out the POTW website:

http://educ.jmu.edu/~rosenhjd/POTW/ Spring13/spring13.html